

## History Of James And Mary Murray Murdoch

I, James Murdoch, am one of your forefathers who was born about 1786, 210 years ago, in Commondyke, Ayrshire Scotland. This was just ten years after the Declaration of Independence was signed in the United States of America. My wife and children serve as the link between Scotland, America and you. (Check page 10)

My kin, most of you now living in America, and a few in Scotland who will get this first copy of the "MURDOCH MESSENGER," I hope you will all realize the importance and value of this publication to bring us closer together as a united family and will therefore help support it and the officers of the James and Mary Murray Murdoch Family Organization in their future plans and "work."

I am honored to have my name at the head of this Family Organization. I would therefore, like to make you acquainted with the few facts that have been recorded about me by my posterity. Reminding you that if you are all doing your personal histories much more will be known about you.

My father's name was James as was my mother's father. (Grandfather Osborne) My father, like me, was born in Commondyke, Ayrshire Scotland about 1752 and married my mother Janet Osborne on February 8, 1781. Mother was christened April 21, 1756 in Fogston, Ochiltree, Ayrshire Scotland. My mother and father's families had lived in the county of Ayrshire, Scotland clear back to the 1600's as present records show.

I had one older brother Robert, then I was born, then my younger brother William. Then my only sister Margaret was last. Robert married an Agnes Aitkin, Margaret an Andrew McTurk and William died when he was about 23 and never married.

My mother, Janet Osborne died and father remarried a Veronica Kirkland on June 18, 1802. I was about 16. Father lived to be about 94 years old, in fact 15 years longer than I did.

I married Jan. 10, 1811 a wee lassie named Mary Murray. I was about 25 and she was 29. We made our first home in Boghead, Ayrshire, Scotland. Mary will tell you a little about herself now.

I, Mary Murray, was born Oct. 13, 1782 in Glencairn, Dumfriesshire, Scotland. This county adjoins Ayrshire where James was born. I was the third child in a family of 14 children. My two older twin brothers, Thomas and John died as children so I was essentially the eldest child at home. I was always tiny, but strong, being only four feet seven inches tall and weighing a little over 90 pounds when full grown. (Thus, the affectionate name Wee Granny in later years.) I had blue gray eyes and a medium complexion.

My father was John Murray of Ayrshire, Scotland and my mother Margaret McCall of Dumfriesshire, Scotland. My father died at about 57 years of age, one year after I married James. Mother died at age 62 about 9 years after father.

My brothers and sisters are as follows: William the fourth child died at age 20 and never married, Adam Goldie married Janet Kier, John's information on death or marriage unknown, Grizzell, a sister, married James Thompson, Campbell married a Margaret Kyle and lived to be 56, Hugh lived to be 17, George lived to be 11, Jane married Robert Chapman and lived to be 58, Thomas married Janet Ferguson and lived to be 68, and then William, the youngest, death and marriage dates are unknown.

My family moved quite frequently around Dumfriesshire County to the following places where my brother and sisters were born; Glencairn, Dumfries, Wanlockhead and Sanquhar. Then they moved to Muirkirk, Ayrshire County, then to Wilsontown, Lanark County, and then back to Muirkirk.

James and I had our first child Janet about one year after we were married. Next followed Mary 1½ years later but she died soon. We then moved to Gaswater, Ayrshire where James was employed in the Limeworks. Here James was born, in 1814, and named after his father and grandfathers. Veronica followed two years later, then we had another girl whom we also called Mary. Next John Murray came in 1820. Margaret followed but also died soon. Last to be born was William in 1825. An orphaned niece Margaret Murray also came to live with us. Now James will tell you a little more.

Mary Murray, my wife, was a hard worker and a thrifty frugal wife and a kind and loving mother to our children. Although small she knew how to discipline and control them and still retain their love and respect. This was important because on Oct. 20, 1831, one year after Prophet Joseph Smith had organized The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints in America, I, James, lost my life at 45 years of age. It came about as we were sinking a new mine shaft. One of the men fell victim to foul air in the shaft and I went down to try to rescue him. We were both overcome and died of what was commonly called "black damp." This left my companion alone with 7 children to raise; Janet-20, James-17, Veronica-15, Mary-14, John-10, William-5, and Margaret, the niece, 4. Mary will now tell you the rest of this history.

The sudden death of James caused me much grief, but with the children to look after, I had to find work for myself and the older children continued to work and be of help. We were thus able to provide the necessities of life with our diet consisting mainly of potatoes and salt at times.

We were renting a home from the Limeworks when James died but within nine years, with the help of my sons, and some kind neighbors we were able to build a little thatched stone cottage which we could call our own. Much love and happiness was crowded into its four walls. (William Lindsay visited Ayrshire in 1907 and saw the ruins of Wee Granny's cottage. He also saw the spot where James lost his life.

The shaft in which he died was about 25 feet deep, but after the tragedy it was never sunk any deeper, but was allowed to cave in and fill up. The depression was about 5 feet deep and had wild daisies growing in it.)

Janet left home 2 years after James' death to marry Alexander Smith. They became the parents of 12 children. Five and one-half years later Veronica married a George Caldwell and became the mother of 11 children. In 1841, three years later, both Mary and James got married. Mary and Allan Mair became the parents of 9 children. James and Margaret McCall had 9 sons. In 1846, at age 21, William married Janet Lennox by whom he had 6 children, and 3 more by a later marriage with a Mary Reid Lindsay for a total of 9 children. Last to marry was John Murray, at age 27 in 1848, to Ann Steele. They became the parents of 15 children and John had 7 more by another wife Isabella Crawford for a total of 22 children. (This totals 72 grandchildren.) With John now gone that left me, Wee Granny, alone except for lots of new grandchildren to see and help tend.

In 1850 a very important event happened to change my life as well as some of my children's. The Mormon Elders (Missionaries) from The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints came to our area of Scotland preaching the Restored Gospel. John Murray and his wife readily accepted the message of the Elders and were baptized members of the Church on Nov. 29, 1850. My daughter Mary and I made a careful and prayerful investigation of this new doctrine and were also convinced of its truthfulness. I was baptized by John, he having been ordained to the priesthood with the proper authority to do so, on Dec. 23, 1851. I was then 69 years old. Mary tried to convince her husband of the truth of Mormonism too but he could not see the need of making a change in his religion. However, she was baptized on June 4, 1851, six months before I was.

In 1852, John Murray, his wife Ann Steele and his two children Elizabeth and James had the opportunity given to them to immigrate to Utah when a call for a Scotch sheepherder to come to Zion came from the Prophet Brigham Young. We tearfully bid each other goodbye with the hope that we would see each other again in the flesh. They had a difficult 9 month journey during which both of their children died enroute and then a third, Mary Murray, named after me, was born in a tent during a thunderstorm just 10 days before they started the trek across the plains by oxen and wagon. Meanwhile, in Scotland, Veronica was baptized in Sept. of 1852, the same month John and Ann reached Salt Lake City. William's wife Janet Lennox was baptized about a year later on Oct. 8, 1853.

After John and Ann had settled down and began gathering a little property, their thoughts turned to their dear family back in Scotland. They knew I was very desirous of coming to Utah as well as Ann's brother James Steele, his wife and two children. John wanted to help take care of me in my approaching old age so was desirous that I should join him. To accomplish this both he and Ann agreed to save every cent possible. It was 1856 before they had saved sufficient and they sent it back to Scotland where we gratefully accepted it. I was nearly 74 years old when I started the long journey. I knew the saints were to cross the plains in handcarts that year but I was determined to accomplish what I thought was right. I loved the Gospel and I desired to be with John and the saints in Zion.

We sailed from Liverpool, England on May 25, 1856 on the ship Horizon. Edward Martin was in charge of the company and it was made up largely of immigrants from England, Scotland, and Scandinavia. There were many women, children and aged people. We landed in Boston and journeyed to Iowa City by rail arriving July 8.

I was assigned to the Martin Handcart Company. (There were 5 companies to leave the summer of 1856. The first arrived safely with little difficulty but the Martin and Willie Companies met with tragedy. Because wagons and oxen were very expensive, these groups used the handcarts that they could pull themselves because they could actually walk faster than the slow plodding oxen.) However, the handcarts and tents were not ready and our Company was forced to wait until late July. We were advised not to make the trek so late in the season, but it was our desire to go on. The Martin Company was the last to leave Iowa City on July 28. It was a month later that we left Florence, Nebraska, the last settlement for hundreds of miles. Our hastily constructed handcarts were made of unseasoned wood and they fell to pieces under the hot prairie sun. It took precious time to repair them. Since we had left late we traveled as far as we could go each day. I walked the long and dreary journey over mountain and plain. The Cheyennes were on the warpath, and word came to us of massacres by the red man. Our food became scarce and it caused us to become weakened by lack of nourishment. Also, we were improperly clad for the inclement weather as an early and severe winter set in. (Of the 575 members of the Company almost one-fourth of them died before reaching Utah. Those that died were often buried in a snow bank, common or shallow grave, wrapped only in a sheet.)

I walked about 700 miles and then succumbing to the fatigue, exposure and hardships of the journey lay down for a final rest. My last words to the James' Steele Family were, "TELL JOHN I DIED WITH MY FACE TOWARD ZION." The date was Oct. 3, 1856 and my weary worn out body was placed in a shallow grave by the side of the trail near Chimney Rock, Nebraska.

James Steele also died but his wife, Elizabeth Wyllie Steele, and her two children went on to tell John of the death and final words of his beloved mother, Mary Murray. John however, knew because of his belief in the Restored Gospel that I was very much alive in the spirit world and again united with his father James. Many of our descendants have since joined us here and you can also, through the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

(Information obtained from the genealogical records of Ruby E. Murdoch Hooper and Histories of the James and Mary Murray Murdoch Family compiled by R. Phillip Rasmussen.)

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## 768

BORN
WHERE
WHEN MARRIED
DIED
WHERE